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General Assembly

Fiftieth Session

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Tuesday, 24 October 1995, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . . (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 29 *(continued)*

Commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations

Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations

The President: This morning we hold the fifth meeting of the Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

Let me begin by reminding all delegations that today is 24 October, the fiftieth birthday of the United Nations. I would like to stress this fact, and to express the hope that our final meetings of today will help us celebrate these 50 years of the life of the Organization. All the peoples of the world, who join with us in this commemoration, hope that the United Nations will be able to continue to serve humanity so nobly in the future.

Before calling on the first speaker, I should like to make an announcement regarding the programme of the last meeting of the Special Commemorative Meeting this afternoon.

After hearing statements by all Member States, the Assembly will proceed to take action on the draft resolution which appears in paragraph 2 of the report (A/50/48) of the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations and which contains the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations.

The Declaration is expected to be adopted by acclamation.

Thereafter, the Assembly will hear the remaining speakers, and the Secretary-General and I will make closing statements.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Runaldo Ronald Venetiaan, President of the Republic of Suriname

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Runaldo Ronald Venetiaan, President of the Republic of Suriname.

His Excellency Mr. Runaldo Ronald Venetiaan, President of the Republic of Suriname, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Venetiaan: It is an honour for me to address the General Assembly today, on the birthday of the United Nations. In the past 50 years the United Nations has guided the peoples of the world past the cliffs of the cold war between East and West, through regional conflicts and the many eruptions of uncounted dormant controversies among groups within a given nation, and also through the dark depths of poverty, disease, discrimination and ignorance.

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In confronting these challenges the United Nations has given individuals and institutions, Governments and non-governmental organizations the opportunity to come forward and distinguish themselves as true servants of humanity, and as workers for peace, for justice and for well-being. The contribution of our Organization of nations has ensured that the suffering of the world owing to natural disasters and caused by human beings themselves has not become a source of despair for humanity. The endeavours of the United Nations have generated positive expectations for harmony among human beings and for harmony between humankind and nature.

In this spirit, the Government and the people of Suriname congratulate the United Nations on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary, and, filled with hope, they face the future together with the Organization. This, however, does not mean that Suriname wishes to ignore the reality of the many threats which endanger our world and the problems the United Nations has to face within its own structure.

There are still many obstacles to overcome in the political, economic and social spheres and in the quest of the international community for a more just, equitable, secure, peaceful and democratic world. The eruption of extreme nationalism, ethnic strife and excessive religious zeal multiplies tension, tears societies and States apart, and threatens world security. Economic and social imbalances still deprive the majority of humankind of development and progress.

Agreed strategies, such as those aimed at curbing population growth or at protecting the environment, are sometimes, for reasons of political or economic competition, affected by hidden agendas, with a view to controlling the political and economic progress of developing countries.

The United Nations system has proven to be a major mechanism at the international level, creative enough to put a common vision and a common approach into effect through multilateral cooperation combining collective action with respect for national sovereignty.

We call upon the international community to contribute fully to the definition and implementation of the new role of the United Nations, which undoubtedly is of a humanitarian nature, and aims at protecting and preserving life on our planet and at raising the standard of living of all peoples, through the establishment of a new, balanced and equitable international economic and social order.

There is no doubt that unless we overcome and rectify certain shortcomings of the United Nations, this Organization will not be able to play its fundamental role in the management of the new world order; neither will it be able to realize its noble principles. Thus, a most urgent task for the international community now is to reinvigorate, restructure and democratize the United Nations and to give it a sound a financial basis for the fulfilment of old and new tasks, in order to relieve international relations of suspicion and hostility, to bring an end to violence, and to fully activate the creative potential of the United Nations for the sound development of the peoples of the world.

We, the family of nations, with political will and in a spirit of understanding, can successfully chart the course of the world towards an order which will be more responsive to the needs and interests of humankind.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Suriname for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Runaldo Ronald Venetiaan, President of the Republic of Suriname, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Ramiro De León Carpio, President of the Republic of Guatemala

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Ramiro De León Carpio, President of the Republic of Guatemala.

His Excellency Mr. Ramiro De León Carpio, President of the Republic of Guatemala, was escorted to the rostrum.

President De León Carpio (*interpretation from Spanish*): Guatemala, which has participated in the work of the United Nations from the first, is present today at this unique congress, which has brought together world leaders to reaffirm the purposes and principles of the San Francisco Charter. The founders were mindful of the tragedy of the two world wars; to ward off similar wars, they created a forum for dialogue and the harmonization of policies, set forth principles for the peaceful settlement of disputes and charged an executive body with responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. But they also sought to create a new order based on justice for all peoples and nations great and small, affirming their common right to live in the same conditions of security, harmony and freedom.

There can never be justice or peace if we deny the right of every human being and every nation to engage in dialogue on a footing of equality and above all to enjoy the identical dignity without which no member of our species can truly be free, without the shackles of poverty and without the bitterness of the hatred engendered by inequality. This is why we believe that universal representation should prevail at the United Nations, without any kind of exclusion.

Let us begin, then, by recognizing that we still have some way to go before we can affirm that peace has been attained. We still endure bloody conflicts that must be brought to an end once and for all, because they are anachronistic, because they are anti-economic, because they are unjust, because they are immoral, but above all because they are inhuman. But peace is not merely the absence of war. Peace is also economic and social, and in this connection we, the least developed nations, have merely asked to be allowed to compete in conditions of fairness, so that our products may have access to the market without being subject to any unjustifiable barriers or conditions not based on economic considerations.

His Holiness Pope John Paul II, who in this Hall made a dramatic appeal for an end to injustice between men and between nations, affirmed that development is the new name of peace. It will never be possible to achieve this peace unless the national policies of the strongest and most powerful countries are promptly transformed into positive action towards democratic consolidation, leading, certainly, to economic globalization, but also to political and social globalization; ensuring economic growth, but growth with a human and a social face, enabling poor countries to attain the true independence and sovereign equality to which we are all fully entitled.

We are met to evaluate our Organization; we must admit our mistakes, and learn from them, but we must also recognize the effects of a general peace, which give us the time and space to address the human problems of poverty, inequality and injustice, which from the very birth of this institution have been an essential part of its agenda, but which still recur with tragic frequency.

With the fall of the Berlin wall the cold war came to an end without bloodshed. We face a new reality that lays a heavy responsibility on large economic blocs, which must have due regard for the ordeals our societies have endured. Above all, we must recall the tragic lessons we have learned and realize that justice cannot be built on inequality, that, similarly, peace cannot be built on hatred, and that democracy can be made effective and functional only through the sum of the actions we take to promote it, without ever resorting to the excuse that we have started a war or committed an injustice to preserve that democracy.

I wish finally to say that soon the people of Guatemala will freely elect a new Chief Executive, to whom I shall hand over the presidency, with the satisfaction of having headed a transitional Government that has fulfilled the primary mandate with which it was entrusted — to rescue, preserve and strengthen institutional legality and democracy, both of which had been seriously impaired — and also with the satisfaction of having, through the democratic process of consulting the people, removed corrupt members of Congress and the Supreme Court from office. I shall relinquish the presidency with the satisfaction of being able to say to the world that, by dint of strenuous efforts, we have made headway in the observance of human rights, which have suffered such serious breaches in Guatemala. We are still experiencing difficulties; but Guatemala is not what it used to be. I shall, finally, leave office with the further satisfaction of having strengthened civilian authority, assigning to the army the role that it should play in a democratic system, and initiating national reconciliation. To this should be added my satisfaction at having fought poverty, corruption, drug-related activities, terrorism and impunity.

But having expressed my satisfaction at these favourable developments, as President of all Guatemalans and as ex-Ombudsman for human rights I must also share with you the anguish and sadness I feel because my countrymen continue to suffer death, desolation, destruction and the bereavement of widows and orphans, all of which is the result of a foreign war that hurled us into the vortex of an internal conflict that has raged for 35 years. This entitles me to make a fervent appeal to the General Assembly for this community to strengthen and support us in our ongoing peace process, not only by fulfilling the institutional obligation that the Organization has assumed, but also with the open hand of international solidarity in the political and economic fields.

Human life is being lost. The guns must fall silent.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Guatemala for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Ramiro De León Carpio, President of the Republic of Guatemala, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. José María Figueres, President of the Republic of Costa Rica

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. José María Figueres, President of the Republic of Costa Rica.

His Excellency Mr. José María Figueres, President of the Republic of Costa Rica, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Figueres *(interpretation from Spanish):* We have come here to celebrate together 50 years of the United Nations. Many of us agree that this is the right time to pause and consider the achievements and the shortcomings of this Organization. It is also an excellent opportunity to look at new dreams and challenges for the future.

We all recognize that in these past 50 years the United Nations has, at decisive moments, been able to tilt the world towards peace and solidarity.

Costa Rica has participated from the beginning as a founder of this Organization. Trusting in it, we abolished our army two years after the founding of the United Nations. Since then we have lived in peace. Not having an army has enabled us to invest more resources in health, education and housing. According to United Nations indicators, this year Costa Rica came first in human development in Latin America.

When, in Costa Rica, we were thinking about how to celebrate this fiftieth anniversary which has brought us together today, we had the idea of proclaiming an international week for peace. Our proposal was approved unanimously by all the countries represented here, and we would like to thank those who joined in or supported this initiative, which begins today.

In these 50 years, and particularly in the last few years, the region of Central America has also made major progress. We have moved from an authoritarian Central America divided by war to a democratic and united Central America which today is building its future through a regional alliance for sustainable development.

Its central objective is the greater well-being of our people. It therefore includes the preservation of the cultural identity of indigenous peoples and the full involvement of women in the development process. This latter aspect may be one of the most powerful instruments for combatting poverty. But the alliance goes further: looking to the future, it includes universal environmental concerns such as the preservation of biodiversity, the ozone layer and the seas.

This fiftieth anniversary comes at a time of transition for the world, and also coincides with Costa Rica's assumption of the presidency of the Group of 77 and China for the coming year. The Group of 77, which was born within the context of the United Nations to combat economic injustices among strong and weaker nations, already has a distinguished history. Yet, on the threshold of a new millennium, its main challenge persists and its dreams have not yet come true.

The trend towards the globalization of the economy could generate advantages for all humanity. But the struggle between powerful trade blocs has increased the injustices among nations. Much is being said today about free trade, but in actual fact those countries that have less not only have to struggle over prices for their products, but they also have to face new trade barriers. They are required to comply very strictly with international norms, while the more powerful are allowed to depart from the agreements they have signed.

We must not give up on the dreams of the Group of 77 and China. We must reaffirm those dreams, and we must find new ways of making them come true.

Accordingly, the United Nations must strengthen the forums for negotiation, dialogue and the quest for agreement. To remain true to the spirit of San Francisco, which gave birth to this Organization, it must not remain neutral or passive in the face of major conflicts. Rather, it should do more. The new challenges include assuming responsibility for protecting and preserving global assets. Only an Organization that represents equally all the peoples of the earth can be successful in this undertaking. We dream of a United Nations that encourages forums of cooperation among all nations to reduce the greenhouse effect, to save, study and make use of the biodiversity of the planet, to decontaminate the seas and, thereby, to ensure the greater well-being of present and future generations.

Today let us think of our peoples. Let us renew our commitment to work in the United Nations to move towards a world of peace, equity and solidarity, advancing along the road towards sustainable development.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Costa Rica for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. José María Figueres, President of the Republic of Costa Rica, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Ernesto Perez Balladares, President of the Republic of Panama

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Ernesto Perez Balladares, President of the Republic of Panama.

His Excellency Mr. Ernesto Perez Balladares, President of the Republic of Panama, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Perez Balladares *(interpretation from Spanish)*: Events such as this are taking place these days in many of our countries, including my own, not so much to mark an anniversary as to thank the United Nations for all it has done in helping to fashion today's world.

Injustice still persists, poverty is endemic in vast regions of the world, respect for human rights for many of its inhabitants is no more than a dream and wars have not completely vanished. But, despite this apparently bleak picture, we should ask ourselves what our world would be like with the destructive power of nuclear weapons and without the United Nations.

The genuinely far-reaching importance of the Organization can be measured not in terms that are quantifiable, but in terms of intangible but real values: the wars that were never fought, the victims that never died because of them, the children who were not orphaned because their parents did not have to die in a war that no one understood.

When we look at the record of these 50 years, many will say that the Organization has been an arena for sterile debate, but it is preferable for the world to have a forum in which conflicts can spend themselves in words rather than constantly to seek battlefields on which to resolve disputes of its own invention. It is better for the world to have an Organization awash with words rather than battlefields strewn with the dead.

Panama is a signatory of the Organization's Charter and enjoys the rare honour of having had a Security Council meeting take place on its soil, for when every diplomatic channel seemed closed to my country the holding of a Council meeting away from Headquarters brought Panama's claims concerning the Canal to the world's attention to an unprecedented degree. A few years later we saw the conclusion of negotiations which terminated a colonial jurisdiction, known as the Canal Zone, and we are now about to begin — it will happen before the end of the century — to operate and administer the inter-oceanic waterway. For this reason we also ask ourselves whether our future would today be as promising had this forum not existed, this unique body in which the rift of differences, however wide, can be bridged and in which discussions can take place between Governments on an equal footing however unequal they may be in terms of wealth or military might.

It is not the world that has grown since Panama together with some 50 other countries, signed the United Nations Charter 50 years ago. What has grown is the number of States that have become independent and welcomed into this Organization; what has grown is the hopes of millions of young people no longer faced with the cruel prospect of dying in senseless and meaningless wars. What perhaps best demonstrates the changes that the world has undergone in this half century since the Second World War is that two of the nations upon whose military defeats the Organization was based today justifiably aspire to become permanent members of the Security Council, and that the language of exclusion has given way to the of universalization of this body.

Our commitment to the United Nations is to help make its mission effective in the next 50 years. We do the Organization no service by blaming it for its mistakes or being content with its many successes. The Organization helped to heal the wounds of a world war; now it must help to bridge the ever-widening technological and educational gulf between its Member nations. The poor countries — the majority of the countries — do not aspire to bring their armies up to the levels of the military Powers, but they have abundant reason for hoping that the insuperable gap in terms of technology and military power will not also become an unbridgeable educational abyss.

If this purpose is fulfilled to an acceptable degree, those who come here to celebrate the centenary of the Organization in the year 2045 will have as many reasons for being grateful to it as today's generation has, for having spared the world the horrors of a war which might well have spelt the end of mankind.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Panama for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Ernesto Perez Balladares, President of the Republic of Panama, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Rafael Caldera, President of the Republic of Venezuela

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Rafael Caldera, President of the Republic of Venezuela.

His Excellency Mr. Rafael Caldera, President of the Republic of Venezuela, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Caldera *(interpretation from Spanish)*: On 11 November 1918 the world joyfully greeted the end of the First World War. The winner set themselves the goal of laying the foundation for everlasting peace. The League of Nations was created in Geneva; political maps were modified, great empires were broken up and the principle of nationalities was applied to establish the limits of States.

Twenty years later a conflagration broke out, of such magnitude that the horrors of the earlier war seemed to pale in comparison. When this conflict ended there was enormous fear of a relapse. A third world war would inevitably have meant the total annihilation of the human race. The weapons of destruction went beyond what man's imagination could have conceived. Astonishingly, man revealed himself capable of successfully devising the instruments for his own destruction.

Simply having avoided the dreadful possibility of a new catastrophe is sufficient justification for this celebration today. There are reasons to congratulate ourselves on this meaningful fiftieth anniversary, in whose success we all share fully. We cannot deny that the threat of nuclear war was a decisive factor for peace, but so also was the existence of this forum, where all nations, large and small, from all continents and of all ethnic descents, can state their views, their demands, their aspirations and their complaints.

The unexpected end of the cold war opened the door to new dreams. However, subsequent events have shown the need to face new and emerging situations across the world so that peace, the fundamental purpose of the Organization, may be strengthened and built on secure and stable foundations.

A new half century is beginning for the United Nations. We must prepare the Organization for a new era with a new agenda. We must analyse in depth the causes of instability and find ways of ensuring peace. The Holy Father, John Paul II, spoke in this very forum of the need to guarantee the human rights of nations in order to complement the human rights of people, proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of 1948.

I believe that among the human rights of nations, we should give special attention to those relating to international social justice which recognizes the right of every people to promote its development on its own terms and to request that the international community remove obstacles such as the burden of external debt and make available the tools needed to contribute to universal well-being.

After the First World War, when the roar of the cannons could still be heard, world leaders understood the importance of social justice and created the International Labour Organization, which survived the League of Nations. During the Second World War, thinking that victory was imminent, the leaders of the allied countries, traumatized by the intensity of the conflict, declared in Philadelphia that poverty anywhere constitutes a danger for the prosperity of all. This should not be forgotten. It would be criminal and suicidal to ignore it.

It is naive to think that the free interplay of economic forces, whose importance we admit, would be sufficient to eradicate poverty. This has been recognized by the United Nations. We are more conscious of the fact that the human element is fundamental to its existence. Many of us are willing to fight for the poor, even at the risk of being called "populists". We must fight against both the effects and the causes of poverty. We cannot simply disregard the conviction that justice is the basis of peace. And social justice is an important aspect of justice. On the other hand, experience worldwide points to another potential threat: corruption in all forms and shapes, which results in the denial of justice. Repressing corruption requires not only the decision of every State, but also international solidarity. Yet, repressing it is not

enough: we must prevent it. We must rescue ethical values for humanity.

So, let us speak frankly: antagonisms of all sorts, poverty, especially abject poverty, selfishness and corruption, which eat away at our conscience and destroy institutions, all represent the most serious threat to peace. The peoples are eagerly waiting for us to assume our responsibility of facing up to these dangers not in word only but in deed.

Antagonism, injustice, poverty and corruption are the greatest enemies that we must fight in the new half-century that is now dawning for the United Nations. It is time to stand up to those enemies, to turn our good intentions into reality. Let us then work to fulfil our duty, target our action and make it effective.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Venezuela for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Rafael Caldera, President of the Republic of Venezuela, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Albert Zafy, President of the Republic of Madagascar

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Albert Zafy, President of the Republic of Madagascar.

His Excellency Mr. Albert Zafy, President of the Republic of Madagascar, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Zafy (*interpretation from French*): I am gratified to have this opportunity to attend this assembly of nations and I join with everyone here in celebrating this great event, the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. Fifty years! We are no longer young, but neither are we old yet. This is maturity, an age replete with usefulness and reason, the result of a wealth of experience garnered over half a century.

The rapid recovery of the nations ruined by six years of war, the end of the cold war and the spectacular collapse of the Berlin Wall are some of the events that fuelled people's hopes for a better world, a world from which war, poverty, destitution and all forms of exploitation would be banished for ever and where respect for rights, real and not simply theoretical equality between nations, small and large, would prevail.

But, we are bound to acknowledge that it is still a great step from precept to practice, from slogan to deed.

Thus, in our humble opinion, this anniversary provides us with an opportunity to take stock of the last half-century and to examine together ways and means to influence the course of the coming years to ensure that this Organization can genuinely live up to the expectations of all the peoples of the world that yearn for peace, equality, respect for human life, and peaceful technological progress.

This special meeting of nations should not be merely a symbolic and ritual commemoration — it should provide an opportunity to take stock and reflect on a new strategy for security, development and the future of democracy inside and outside our Organization.

For its part, Madagascar fully supports reform of the United Nations that is consistent with its true vocation. We should give the General Assembly, the most representative body of Members opinions, adequate powers, expand the Security Council on the basis of geographical distribution so that it may truly become a body for implementing General Assembly resolutions and reflect equality, and hence, democracy. Exercise of the right of veto is anti-democratic and therefore anachronistic.

Poverty, drugs, the debt burden, the increase of fundamentalism, xenophobia, regional conflicts and unemployment are the evils dogging this century, the fruits of social injustice and economic imbalance.

There was a time when we feared the "yellow peril". Now, our fears are focused on the "black peril" or the "coffee-coloured peril" with regard to immigrants in Europe. In the short term, this anxiety could help the third world. The risk of destabilization as a result of immigration has heightened the awareness of many people in favour of increased development assistance for the third world to stem this exodus to rich countries.

Many voices, including in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have been heard sounding an alarm to alert decision-makers to tackle the root of the problem by investing more, for example, in the social sphere. But, there is a school of thought that opposes the 20/20 initiative that has been adopted by the United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Population Fund, the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture

Organization of the United Nations and UNESCO to free up sufficient resources and which advocates budget reductions arguing that the needed financial resources are not available.

It is deplorable to note that special or national interests sometimes prevail over the sense of solidarity that increasing interdependence requires.

As a result of the global context we must provide the United Nations with the resources it needs to be able to carry out its essential tasks, which are to ensure peace, promote development and serve democracy.

The third world faces many constraints. The application of the widely advocated concept of good governance with less emphasis on traditional donor assistance is not impartial: it is very flexible and indulgent when it comes to countries with strategic raw materials, but strict and restrictive when it comes to others.

Docility or passivity is often highly regarded; expressing criticism puts you in the category of naughty student. The perverse effects of economic embargoes harm the innocent civilian population more than those they are intended to punish. By contrast, a firm approach should be the rule in the case of arms embargoes.

On the threshold of the twenty-first century, the United Nations finds itself at a new crossroads. It is clear that changes must be introduced in our Organization, which was conceived 50 years ago in a totally different political and economic context.

Our determination to work to that end will be the best response both to the anxieties of the developing world, which has doubts about the solidity of the North's commitment to contribute to solving the problem of development, and to the demands of public opinion in the developed countries, which is concerned to see development assistance put to proper use. Consensus on the steps to be taken would restore confidence in the future of the United Nations.

Allow me to express my great pleasure at seeing all of you here at this session of the General Assembly to which the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, has so kindly invited us. I pay tribute to his competence, his devotion and his keen sense of responsibility. I thank him for the remarkably successful organization of this Special Meeting.

I am also pleased to congratulate the City of New York and its Mayor, Mr. Giuliani, and his team for the success of our stay in the "Big Apple" of New York.

I should also like to pay tribute to the President of the United States of America for his benevolent support for the convening of this commemoration of the United Nations fiftieth anniversary.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Madagascar for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Albert Zafy, President of the Republic of Madagascar, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Punsalmaagiin Ochirbat, President of Mongolia

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Punsalmaagiin Ochirbat, President of Mongolia.

His Excellency Mr. Punsalmaagiin Ochirbat, President of Mongolia, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Ochirbat *(spoke in Mongolian; English text furnished by the delegation)*: The United Nations, having risen from the ashes of the most devastating war in the history of humankind, is today celebrating its golden anniversary with a renewed sense of purpose and confidence in the future.

From a distance of 50 years one could reasonably argue that there were no victors or vanquished in that war and that the sole winner was the entire human race. But the 50 million who perished in it will always be a stark reminder of the imperative still fundamental today, namely, perseverance in our collective efforts to achieve peace, progress and social justice. I say this in the name of a country that stood by the Allied forces and did all it could to facilitate the victory over fascism and militarism.

The second half of this century will go down in the annals of history as a time of great victories of human genius, of the triumphant struggles of peoples for freedom, independence and democracy, of a dawning realization of the humanistic ideals of equity, justice and human rights. In all these truly revolutionizing processes the part played by the United Nations has indeed been instrumental.

This half century will also be remembered as a time of tremendous waste of human creativity and energy for purposes of destruction, a time of rising disparities between nations, of flagrant abuse of nature and its finite resources and, above all, of unprecedented loss of human lives and human deprivation despite the infinite possibilities opened up by revolutions in science and technology. This turbulent world of glaring contrasts, having moved beyond the cold war, has now entered a new stage of rapid changes in its development.

Challenging as it may be, history is offering us a unique opportunity for a genuine realization of the lofty objectives and ideals conceived by the founders of the United Nations. This calls insistently for a bold reform of the Organization. It goes without saying that the underlying purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter should constitute the foundation of any and all change. The reform process should embrace the entire United Nations system. Democratization, transparency, accountability, and due consideration of the positions of all should be at the heart of reform. Reform especially concerns the Security Council. In our view, this soul-searching undertaking should lead us to an Organization that is more sensitive to and protective of the needs and interests of the smaller and weaker majority.

The United Nations is all too often criticized and blamed for every ill and wrong. But it is all too often forgotten that the effectiveness of our Organization directly depends on the political will of its Member States. The United Nations is not only a rostrum for us to express our thoughts but, as a centre for harmonizing our actions and positions, it should also provide the model criteria for constructive negotiations.

In our view, it is imperative to make the mechanism for the pacific settlement of disputes work. This could include, *inter alia*, the further development and implementation of ground rules that would help ensure that negotiations are conducted solely and exclusively on the basis of good will and respect for the sovereign and equal rights of all participants, unimpeded by any actions designed to disrupt them, poison their atmosphere or attain unilateral concessions through pressure. We believe that this is an important issue that deserves due consideration by the General Assembly.

In conclusion, may I reaffirm Mongolia's determination to join with other sister nations in our common endeavour to bequeath to succeeding generations a world that is peaceful, prosperous, pluralist and humane.

The President: I thank the President of Mongolia for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Punsalmaagiin Ochirbat, President of Mongolia, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Jiang Zemin, President of the People's Republic of China

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Jiang Zemin, President of the People's Republic of China.

His Excellency Mr. Jiang Zemin, President of the People's Republic of China, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Jiang Zemin *(interpretation from Chinese)*: In a few years' time mankind will bid farewell to the twentieth century with all its vicissitudes, and enter the twenty-first century, with all its promise. At this historic juncture it is of great significance that we have gathered here from all corners of the world to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

The founding of the United Nations 50 years ago was a major event in the history of international relations. It reflected the strong desire of the people of the world to eliminate the scourge of war and mirrored humanity's dream for a new world of peace, equality, cooperation and prosperity.

Over the past 50 years our world has undergone earth-shaking changes. The struggle for national liberation and social progress has raged like a prairie fire. Mankind has maintained peace for half a century. However, all is not tranquil in the world today. The international situation after the end of the cold war has, on the whole, moved towards relaxation, yet hegemonism and power politics have lingered, armed conflicts and local wars have kept cropping up one after another, and hundreds of millions of people in the developing world are still struggling with poverty.

Over the past 50 years the United Nations has done much useful work in mitigating regional conflicts, eradicating colonialism, expediting arms reduction and promoting peace and development in the world. However, it also has its failures and setbacks. Certain big Powers have tended to use the Organization as a

signboard under which to advance their own political interests, and their rivalry has often left the United Nations in limbo. Moreover, the rights and interests of the large number of developing countries have not been fully respected for a long time.

Our experience and lessons over the past half century, the purposes and principles of the Charter and the epochal themes of peace and development have all placed solemn and urgent demands on us.

We must create a secure and reliable international environment of lasting peace and stability. Disputes between States should be resolved through peaceful negotiations and consultations instead of resorting to the use or threat of force. Efforts should be made to stem and remove various factors that might lead to war, with a view to safeguarding the security of all countries and regions in the world.

We must uphold the norms governing international relations, with the principles of sovereign equality and non-interference in each other's internal affairs as the core. These principles established by the founders of the United Nations in the Charter 50 years ago have greater vitality and are of realistic significance today. All sovereign States are equal members of the international community. It is time that we wrote a new chapter in the annals of international relations in which the phenomena of the big bullying the small, the strong lording it over the weak and the rich oppressing the poor are removed completely from the face of the Earth.

We must establish a new type of international economic relations featuring mutual benefit, mutual complementarity and common development. The internationalization of economic life requires that all countries conduct extensive economic exchanges and cooperation. The developed countries should help the developing countries to revitalize their economies, which also serves the long-term interests of the developed countries.

We should bring about a situation of international harmony which allows countries to make independent choices and seek common ground while putting aside differences. It is within the sovereignty of every nation to opt, in keeping with its own reality and the will of its people, for a social system and road of development of its own choice. No one else has the right to interfere with it. It is only by respecting one another seeking common ground while putting aside differences, living with one another in amity and complementing one another that we can make the world as colourful as a garden where a hundred flowers compete for the beauty prize.

We must join hands in meeting the challenges to human survival and development. We all share one and the same planet. The solution to such global issues as ecological degradation and population explosion requires not only efforts at the national level but also close coordination and cooperation at the international level.

It is our view that the foregoing points should be incorporated in the new international political and economic order whose establishment has been eagerly desired by the people of all countries. The United Nations should and can play its important and unique role in this regard. It can be said that the realization of such a new international political and economic order is the main hallmark of the better world we are to build together.

Loving peace and desiring development, the Chinese people are willing to cultivate friendly relations and cooperation with the people of the rest of the world and steadfastly pursue an independent foreign policy of peace. Even when China becomes stronger and developed it will not seek hegemony or pose a threat to anyone. On the contrary, China, as an important force for the maintenance of world peace and stability will make an even greater contribution to mankind.

There is only one China in the world and Taiwan is an inalienable part of Chinese territory. The Government of the People's Republic of China is China's sole legal Government and its sole representative in the United Nations. The Chinese people have the ability, the resourcefulness and the confidence to overcome any interference in putting an end to the division between the two sides of the Taiwan Straits and achieve the reunification of the motherland.

Being a founding Member of the United Nations and one of the permanent members of the Security Council, China has always abided by the purposes and principles of the Charter and conscientiously fulfilled its international responsibilities and obligations. We believe that the United Nations should adopt necessary and appropriate reforms in the spirit of fairness, reasonableness and full consultation.

The political leaders of our generation have on their shoulders the historic mission of carrying forward the

cause of world peace, development and progress into the future. In looking forward to the new century, let us join hands and work together for a still better world.

The President: I thank the President of the People's Republic of China for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Jiang Zemin, President of the People's Republic of China, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III, Head of State of the Principality of Monaco

The President: The Assembly will next hear a statement by His Serene Highness Prince Rainier, Head of State of the Principality of Monaco.

His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III, Head of State of the Principality of Monaco, was escorted to the rostrum.

Prince Rainier (*interpretation from French*)**:** The Principality of Monaco, which takes a modest seat among the concert of nations, is honoured to be able to join in this solemn tribute paid by the General Assembly in devoting this Special Meeting to commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.

The terrible images of the Second World War, of horrible combats, of massive destruction, of endless suffering inflicted on innocent civilians and on combatants, remind us of the kind of events and dangers that brought the representatives of 51 allied countries to San Francisco to sign, on 26 June 1945, the Charter that established the United Nations.

While the balance of military force and diplomacy has since that memorable date spared mankind a further world conflagration, many countries have suffered from armed conflict. We still see too often the tragic picture of civilians fleeing the fighting and taking the road of exodus to uncertain destinations; we see families, women and old people completely abandoned.

In all circumstances, the United Nations has done its utmost, with the authority and means available to it, to help promote a return to peace, to protect the peoples exposed to danger and to ease the suffering of victims.

Experience has shown that the needs which gave rise to the San Francisco Charter are with us today.

Apart from the conflicts that I have just mentioned, in the past 50 years the world has also undergone other upheavals which political leaders have to take into account in their day-to-day activities and in their decisions.

Focusing only on the essentials, I shall speak about the population explosion throughout the world and the serious attacks on nature and the environment by urbanization and industrialization; the major advances by science and technology, which have often benefited man but have sometimes also brought new threats to his life or health; the appearance of scourges, such as drugs and AIDS; and blind terrorism of various kinds and authors.

The United Nations and its specialized agencies are doing their utmost to bring about the exchange of knowledge, and cooperation and agreement, the only way to enable people and nations to move along the road to peace and sustainable prosperity. That is the major challenge facing us at the end of the second millennium.

As a Member of the United Nations the Principality of Monaco has adhered to the purposes and principles enshrined in the San Francisco Charter. For the time being, my country has no other ambition than to live up to the commitments it has entered into under the Charter and to implement the decisions taken on the basis of the Charter.

Monaco is regularly involved financially in the work being undertaken on behalf of children, refugees, victims of torture, and disabled persons — indeed the humanitarian work of the Organization. Our Principality is always willing to participate in initiatives to strengthen the protection of unarmed civilian populations during times of conflict.

The Principality is a seagoing country and is particularly active, and intends to continue being active, in the sphere of protection of the seas and oceans, and, beyond that, nature in general.

Monaco remains faithful to the recommendations adopted at the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit and is striving to implement them. We now know that natural resources are not inexhaustible. Only by using them in moderation can we ensure peace and well-being for future generations.

I cannot end my statement without paying well-deserved tribute to the current and former officials and

staff of the United Nations — first among them, of course, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali and his predecessors — for their devotion and self-sacrifice, sometimes at the peril of their lives, in the service of this Organization.

May the experience of the last 50 years encourage us to persevere in our efforts so that the world can take even greater inspiration from the ideals that led the way in the founding of the United Nations.

Peace is not merely the absence of war. It is, above all, a vocation residing within each one of us, and when its seeds are spread, peace can take root and flourish everywhere and for everyone.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I thank the Head of State of the Principality of Monaco for his statement.

His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III, Head of State of the Principality of Monaco, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Cheddi Jagan, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Cheddi Jagan, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana.

His Excellency Mr. Cheddi Jagan, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Jagan: As the United Nations proudly celebrates its fiftieth anniversary, I wish to join the other Members of our international family in paying tribute to the Organization which has served us so well over these many years.

As so many others before me have testified, the accomplishments of the United Nations during its 50 years of existence have been many and significant. With the ending of the cold war, there is now a promise of even greater achievements.

Yet, although now free from the tensions of East-West rivalry, we are still hostage to many threats to our peace and security. This crucial time is characterized by, first, globalization and liberalization of the world economy, dominated by transnational corporations and one over-powering ideology; second, unacceptably high unemployment and underemployment, even in a period of economic growth, referred to as "jobless growth" and "jobless recovery"; third, increasing poverty and widening gaps, in developed and developing countries, between the haves and the have-nots — the included and the excluded — and between the rich North and the poor South; fourth, chronic budget and balance-of-payments deficit problems for many Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, leading to the dismantling of the welfare State and cuts in welfare benefits in the North, as well as cuts in aid to the South — the phenomenon now termed "donor fatigue" or "aid fatigue"; fifth, social, including family, disintegration; sixth, strife and conflicts based on race, ethnicity, tribe, culture and religion, leading to a marked increase in refugees; and, seventh, demagogy and confusion, leading politically, to the dangerous rise of the extreme right, the religious right, national chauvinists, xenophobists and neofacists and, socially, to racism and racist attacks.

Cumulatively, these factors pose a grave threat to international and individual peace and security. Consequently, there is an urgent necessity for a new global human order as an adjunct to the United Nations Agenda for Development. A new global human order must have as its goal human development, which means meeting the basic needs of the people, attaining cultural uplift and providing a clean and safe environment.

To attain a new global human order, it is necessary to establish a sound and just system of global governance based on a genuine North-South partnership and interdependence for mutual benefit; a democratic culture of representative, consultative and participatory democracy and a lean and clean administration; a development strategy free from external domination and *diktat*; the application of science and technology for increased production and productivity; a global development facility, funded by pollution taxes, cuts in military expenditure — the peace dividend — a mere 3 per cent reduction of which could realize $460 billion in the five-year period from 1995-2000, and a tax of 0.5 per cent on speculative capital-exchange movements, which could yield $1,500 billion annually; and the administration of a development fund by a democratized and reformed United Nations for allocation without undue conditions to the developed and developing countries alike — with such assistance, more job opportunities could be created by a works programme, as was done under the Roosevelt New Deal Administration during the Depression of the 1930s, and we could have a shorter

work week and a lower pensionable age, while for the developing countries, aid could be given in the form of debt cancellation, long-term rescheduling of debt, soft loans and grants.

Third-world debt is strangling our reconstruction and human development efforts. Although we paid more than $1.3 trillion between 1982 and 1990, our countries were 61 per cent deeper in debt in 1990 than they were in 1982. During the same period there was a net South-to-North outflow of $418 billion — not including outflows such as royalties, dividends, repatriated profits, underpaid raw materials and so on — a sum equal to six Marshall Plans, the Plan which provided aid to Europe at the end of the Second World War. At the same time, our third-world countries lose about $500 billion annually in unfair non-equivalent international trade, a sum equal to 10 times the official development assistance from the developed countries.

This unjust economic order must be replaced by a just new global human order for international and individual security and peace. The human development paradigm must be established on a basis of empowerment of our peoples, accountability, productivity and sustainability. Economic growth must be linked to equity, with social justice and ecological preservation.

Let us together resolve, on this historic occasion, to strengthen the United Nations, which was created not only to preserve us from the scourge of war but also to allow our peoples to live in larger freedom. Let us move forward in unity with a new global human order.

The President: I thank the President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Cheddi Jagan, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Alija Izetbegović, President of the Presidency of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Alija Izetbegović, President of the Presidency of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

His Excellency Mr. Alija Izetbegović, President of the Presidency of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Izetbegović: The United Nations, whose anniversary we celebrate today, has always been a source of our hope, but also a constant cause of our disappointment. Some say that it is the largest, but, on occasions, the most inefficient body in human history. The number of unimplemented resolutions is proof of this. Being as it is, our Organization probably reflects the imperfection of our world. If the continuous improvement of the world is not work in vain, the further improvement of the United Nations is not only possible, but very necessary.

The supreme goal is the maintenance of peace. The United Nations has succeeded in the prevention of global conflict, but it has proved less effective in stopping local ones. The sum of the catastrophic consequences in local wars from the founding of the United Nations until today has reached a tragic balance with the world wars of this century.

The United Nations acted effectively in stopping the Gulf crisis. Unfortunately, this efficacy has not repeated itself in the case of the aggression against my country. The price of hesitation has been enormous. My people have paid this high price.

I would like to repeat the words of the Georgian Minister for Foreign Affairs, who at this rostrum two days ago stated:

> "We must have the courage and the will to call an aggressor an aggressor, and genocide genocide." (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 36th meeting, p. 29*)

As the Assembly knows, very often, there has been a lack of either courage or will, or sometimes both.

In several days the talks on peace in Bosnia will commence. We approach this initiative, undertaken by the United States and its President, with the best of faith and with plenty of hope. Our people need and want peace. We did not start this war, and, although we are enduring, we have not dreamed of being victors in war. We have always worked towards peace and we would like to be victors in peace. We want to strengthen a society based on political and ethnic pluralism, respect

for human rights and private enterprise. Since, on the other side, everything is opposite to this, we are confident that our ideas will triumph in a peaceful concurrence in the next five to 10 years. Thanks to the superiority of our models of society and State, we shall win, with God's help.

The Bosnian Government and Army will not accept the division and disintegration of our country, no matter in what packaging it may be served. The division of Bosnia will lead to the continuation of war, immediately or later.

Genuine democratic elections in Bosnia are a big chance — if not the only real chance — to remove from the commanding political and military functions the war criminals and nationalist fanatics who caused this war and who will continue to poison the relations between people and nations. In order for this chance for democracy in the Balkans not to be wasted, it is necessary to ensure certain conditions. These conditions are freedom and effective international supervision of elections.

If the peace negotiations are concluded successfully, the reconstruction of the war-stricken areas will follow, in particular in Bosnia. The international community is promising significant support for the reconstruction plan. In this connection, I would make one, maybe unexpected, proposal: put conditions on this assistance. Send a clear message that the party which will not respect freedoms and human rights will not receive assistance. And decide that these conditions should be strictly observed. Do not make mistakes again, in the hope that you can buy or change the criminals and tyrants by new concessions. And take one step further. Isolate the criminals and tyrants. That is the only way.

Those who have led their people to the path of crime must be removed. Without this there is no peace or security, neither in Bosnia, nor in the region.

We want and have the right to integrate Bosnia, which has been destroyed, not through the will of its people, but through the force of weapons. The Bosniak-Croat Federation is an important step in this direction, and all friends of Bosnia should support and assist this project.

In order to achieve peace, and — what is more — to maintain it, it is necessary to establish a balance in weaponry. This balance can be established on a higher or lower level. We give preference to the latter, and we demand the reduction of Serbian heavy weaponry. If the Serbs reject this, the only option is to arm the Bosnian Army, which, so strengthened, will become a factor of peace and stability in the region.

At present, almost all of our cities are within the reach of Serbian artillery. This artillery must be removed or destroyed. We cannot and we will not agree to continue to live under permanent threat.

Finally, in the past two days many speeches have been delivered in this Hall. We have heard nice and lofty words on democracy and freedom and all that comes with them. Freedom and justice have been recalled by some of those who have stridden and continue to stride over the basic rights of people and nations.

One of the ancient holy scriptures says "Judge them according to their deeds". Therefore, let us listen to what they are saying, but let us see what they are doing. As soon as they return home, they will continue their unrepentant course — of course, if we continue to tolerate it.

The President: I thank the President of the Presidency of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Alija Izetbegović, President of the Presidency of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Wilton S. Sankawulo, Chairman of the Council of State of the Liberian National Transitional Government of the Republic of Liberia

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Wilton Sankawulo, Chairman of the Council of State of the Liberian National Transitional Government of the Republic of Liberia.

His Excellency Mr. Wilton S. Sankawulo, Chairman of the Council of State of the Liberian National Transitional Government of the Republic of Liberia, was escorted to the rostrum.

Chairman Sankawulo: On the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, I am greatly honoured and most gratified to have an opportunity to address this august body.

Half a century ago men of optimism who envisioned a world of peaceful coexistence among nations founded

the United Nations. They saw the necessity of instituting measures for the prevention and the removal of threats to international peace and security. They wanted to encourage friendly relations between States based on the principles of sovereignty, equality and improving the quality of life for all peoples by fostering economic, social and cultural cooperation throughout the world.

This historic development was prompted by the horrifying experience of two world wars — devastation that threatened the annihilation of life on Earth in all its forms. Additionally, the rapidity with which new weapons of mass destruction were being introduced in the theatre of war aroused the urgent need to set up a permanent mechanism to regulate international relations. The founders of the United Nations also saw the need for defining and codifying rules of conduct for the prevention, management and peaceful resolution of disputes between nations.

If the spectre of war prevails in most of the countries that attained independence after the birth of the United Nations, it is due largely to the legacy of colonialism, the cold war and the pains that often characterize the new birth of freedom. Colonial powers disregarded the traditional values and social needs of their subjects. The contest for spheres of influence during the cold war gave rise to autocratic regimes, which were insensitive to the aspirations of their peoples. These new democracies must go through growing pains before acquiring maturity. Thus the signing of the United Nations Charter 50 years ago in San Francisco by 51 States, including my country — Liberia — was a significant milestone in the creation of a global arrangement for securing human liberty, as well as maintaining international peace and progress.

This Charter embodies the aspirations of all mankind. Believing in the principles for which it stands, including that of universality, many countries joined the Organization. Today, its membership stands at 185 States. By providing a forum for a frank exchange of views on international issues, the United Nations draws together nations of diverse ideological orientations to tackle their common problems.

A beacon of hope for mankind, the United Nations vigorously fought colonialism and racial discrimination, strongly advocating the right of all members of society to live a free, secure and fulfilling life. In order to safeguard this right, the United Nations established a number of specialized agencies to combat the perennial enemies of mankind: ignorance, disease and poverty. We can say with pride and satisfaction that the United Nations has won for itself enviable records of success in these endeavours. Most colonized nations have received their independence; the obnoxious system of apartheid has crumbled; the quality of life has vastly improved in many countries.

However, the United Nations cannot afford to rest on its laurels, for its successes are overshadowed by conflicts in many parts of the world. A steadily widening prosperity gap and inequities strain relations between the developed and the developing countries. We hope that the nations of the world, especially those enjoying economic affluence, will take positive steps in the near future to establish a new economic order that will improve the quality of life for all peoples. To do less would be an act of non-compliance with the Charter's mandate to forge international machinery to promote the economic and social advancement of all nations.

As peace and development are inextricably linked, Liberia welcomes the two expositions of the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, entitled "An Agenda for Peace" and "An Agenda for Development". Both documents provide a framework in which we can implement the principles contained in the United Nations Charter as it relates to the new realities of the post-cold-war era.

Liberia lends its voice to the call for restructuring of the United Nations. This vital institution must continue evolving and growing in an enlightened fashion, but always within the limits of the principles enshrined in its Charter.

I want to utilize this forum to inform the Assembly that, after almost six years of bitter civil war, Liberians are more hopeful than ever before that peace is finally at hand. This achievement is due largely to the intervention of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which is currently under the dynamic leadership of President Jerry John Rawlings of Ghana. Liberians will for ever remain grateful to our West African brothers for providing and maintaining a peace-keeping force in their country for the security of the people. This, indeed, is an example of genuine African solidarity.

We also extend our deepest appreciation to the United Nations, its specialized agencies, the United States and the international community for the assistance they have rendered throughout our conflict. Now that we have come to a crucial point in our search for peace, we appeal to States Members of the United Nations to render

us the assistance needed to bring this conflict to an end by providing the requisite support for the disarmament and demobilization of fighters and the repatriation of our people who are currently languishing in refugee camps abroad. We are assured of peace because the present Council of State comprises all factional leaders, who have turned territories under their control over to the Cease-fire Monitoring Group of ECOWAS (ECOMOG) for the immediate disarmament of all their fighters.

As the Liberian Government and people begin fulfilling the sacred mandate of returning the country to democratic rule, we shall need the continuous support of the international community, not only for the disarmament and demobilization of fighters but also for the social and economic reconstruction of the nation. We are appealing for this support so that Liberia — a founding Member of the United Nations — may regain its standing in the comity of nations. It is our fervent hope that all States Members of the United Nations will make substantial contributions to the Pledging Conference on Liberia to be conducted by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, President Rawlings of Ghana and myself this Friday for the generation of funds to implement programmes that will put Liberia back on its feet.

As we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, it is worth noting that, despite its setbacks and shortcomings, this Organization remains the world's principal mechanism for maintaining international peace and security and for mobilizing collective efforts to deal with global problems.

As we approach the twenty-first century, we must build a new global order that can fulfil the yearnings of the human family for peace, social justice and progress. Liberia reaffirms its abiding faith in and its commitment to the principles of the United Nations.

May God save this all-important Organization as it endeavours to bring peace and prosperity to mankind.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the Council of State of the Liberian National Transitional Government of the Republic of Liberia for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Wilton S. Sankawulo, Chairman of the Council of State of the Liberian National Transitional Government of the Republic of Liberia, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Kuniwo Nakamura, President of the Republic of Palau

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Kuniwo Nakamura, President of the Republic of Palau.

His Excellency Mr. Kuniwo Nakamura, President of the Republic of Palau, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Nakamura: It is a great honour and pleasure to address this historic gathering and to have the unique privilege of hearing the profound reflections of the world's leaders on the institution of the United Nations and the status of our world.

Mr. Berisha (President of Albania), Vice-President of the General Assembly, took the Chair.

We are in a period of unprecedented change and opportunity. I refer not only to the remarkable geopolitical events of this decade but also to the accelerating scientific developments changing our world every day. Technical advances, particularly in the fields of telecommunications, computers and material sciences, seem almost miraculous and offer an improved quality of life never before thought possible. They tie our countries, large and small, together and make us dependent on each other as never before in the history of our planet. Money and ideas move instantly across borders. We have the ability to properly feed, educate and provide health care to every human on the planet.

On the other hand, we may be letting these great opportunities slip away. We in Palau are alarmed at the continued degradation of our environment. Every day brings further news of the extinction of species, the irrevocable loss of whole ecosystems, the irrefutable evidence of global warming and a host of additional environmental problems. The continued testing of nuclear weapons not only suggests the spectre of worldwide destruction but also poses potential environmental problems, particularly when such experiments use the Pacific Ocean as their testing area.

Many of the problems we now face can be traced to limited perspective. We may be able to think of, and be concerned for, our children or grandchildren, but who can really care for, or even imagine, our descendants hundreds of years in the future? Large-scale conflicts between nations are often a product of a perspective

which focuses on the small differences between groups, and not the enormous similarities between all people.

The United Nations represents the most ambitious and noble attempt humankind has ever made to craft a lens with which to transcend self-interest as individuals and as nations. With such a lens we are able to consider issues from the vantage point of the representatives of our close-knit global family who will come here to the United Nations 50 and 100 years from now to celebrate future anniversaries of this magnificent institution.

The United Nations was born out of a global consciousness shocked by the horrors of the Second World War and it is appropriate that much of its energies are focused on the prevention of war. However, we must recognize that warfare is often a function of economic disparity. An effective tool for the prevention of war is therefore the creation of economic strength within nations and the promotion of economic interdependency between nations. To help prevent conflict, the nations of the world must work through the United Nations, the World Bank and other appropriate bodies to ensure the enhancement of economic cooperation between its Members.

As the newest Member of the United Nations, we also strongly support the desires and aspirations of indigenous people who are still struggling for their basic rights. We believe that the United Nations must continue fully to support self-determination and to give hope to people who desire freedom and control of their own destiny.

Our planet has been compared to a spaceship flying through the universe. As the President of a maritime nation, I prefer to think of it as a sailing vessel. When my ancestors sailed from South-East Asia to Palau, they needed courage, knowledge and wisdom. As nations, we too will need all of these qualities in the coming years. But most of all, my forebears needed to cooperate for the common good in order to survive. The United Nations is at the helm of our planetary ship and we are the captains, navigators and crew. We must all learn to sail together if our voyage is to be a successful one. May peace, harmony and good will ultimately prevail on our planet.

The Acting President: I thank the President of the Republic of Palau for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Kuniwo Nakamura, President of the Republic of Palau, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Pasteur Bizimungu, President of the Rwandese Republic

The Acting President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Pasteur Bizimungu, President of the Rwandese Republic.

His Excellency Mr. Pasteur Bizimungu, President of the Rwandese Republic, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Bizimungu: As we are celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, we pay homage to the founding fathers of this Organization, whose vision has charted the way for humanity. The Organization was founded in the aftermath of two devastating world wars.

The purpose was to save mankind from similar calamities arising from social injustices by providing moral tenets for peoples and nations. Indeed, the United Nations formulated and developed significant basic principles relating to human and fundamental rights, the equality of nations and peoples, and the promotion of social and economic progress for all humanity. A lot has been achieved. However, the proclamation of those noble objectives on the one hand and their implementation on the other have, on many occasions, reflected double standards.

While the Charter stipulated the self-determination and sovereignty of nations, colonized people have often had to resort to armed struggle to restore their freedom. Even after flag-independence, new nations remain burdened by the influence of the dominant Powers. If ours were not a sham independence, former colonies would no longer be considered areas of influence where the strategy of "divide and rule" is still applied and the traditional relationship is still that of dominator and dominated.

Last year's horrendous genocide in Rwanda, which cost over a million lives, was the direct consequence of the factors that I have mentioned. Before the advent of colonialism, Rwanda was already a coherent nation. Our ancestors successfully strived to build a nation and a people called Banyarwanda from many kingdoms and peoples.

For centuries, Rwanda existed without divisions on the basis of ethnic or any other sectarian tendencies. Colonialism introduced racist theories and ideologies and practised discrimination. The first ethnic massacre

engineered by the authorities in the history of Rwanda occurred in 1959. Rwanda was still under colonial rule. It is important to recall that, from the end of the First World War until 1962, Rwanda was administered under the trusteeship of the League of Nations and subsequently of the United Nations. Since that time, Rwanda has had nationals living in exile as refugees. The plight of those refugees, who numbered about 2 million before last year's genocide, received no attention for over three decades. The existence of those refugees is vivid testimony of the discriminatory policy that was pursued inside the country. In actual fact, the present Government is the first in the history of modern Rwanda that does not prevent its nationals in exile to return home.

Were it not for outside interference intended to divide our compatriots, the Rwandese people, based on moral principles and legal instruments set by the United Nations, would easily find solutions to the consequences of genocide and a path towards national reconciliation. But now, the planners and perpetrators of genocide are welcomed in some capitals, not only as ordinary, innocent refugees, but as heroes deserving to lead people. Those same criminals, encouraged by complacency, plan to carry on genocide and are being re-armed while at the same time they forbid refugees to return home.

Not only is this a violation of international conventions; it also reflects moral decay. How can the world be peaceful when there is no respect for basic principles and when there is no morality? It is in this context that President Daniel arap Moi of Kenya pretends to serve a good cause by associating with those criminals and protecting them.

In economic matters, relations between rich and poor countries are also characterized by the domination of the weak by the strong. One example is that, when negotiating with financial partners, underdeveloped countries have no choice but to accept projects the way those international financial institutions want them. But when they fail, the consequences are not shared — all of them are shifted to the poor nations. This is the origin of the debt burden, which has negative effects on development.

Mechanisms should be worked out so that the United Nations can deliver on expectations. In particular, there is a need to reform the Security Council to make it more representative and to strengthen the role of the General Assembly.

The future of our Organization, our future, requires us to strive for unconditional solidarity and more dynamic cooperation. Mankind should never again witness the horrors of genocide that took place in Rwanda and the current "ethnic cleansing" in the former Yugoslavia must be brought to an end. We count on the United Nations to direct and support our efforts to create a better world for humanity.

The Acting President: I thank the President of the Rwandese Republic for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Pasteur Bizimungu, President of the Rwandese Republic, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Zhelyu Zhelev, President of the Republic of Bulgaria

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Zhelyu Zhelev, President of the Republic of Bulgaria.

His Excellency Mr. Zhelyu Zhelev, President of the Republic of Bulgaria, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Zhelev: I would like to thank Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali for his warm welcome and the opportunity to address this most representative international forum on behalf of the Republic of Bulgaria, whose people celebrate, together with the whole world, the fiftieth birthday of the United Nations.

Its birth was both a promising beginning and a triumphant end to a terrible war. In the gigantic clash between democracy and totalitarianism during the Second World War, the democratic forces in Bulgaria preserved their nation's dignity. Despite the difficult historic circumstances, Bulgaria allowed no Bulgarian Jew to be sent to the death camps and no Bulgarian soldier to fight against the anti-Nazi coalition. What is more, it fought against the Nazis in the winter and spring of 1945. Regrettably, Bulgaria could only join the United Nations 10 years later, when it had already been entrapped in the Warsaw Treaty Organization at the cost of its independent policy.

Without the principles laid down in the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1989 "velvet" revolutions in Eastern Europe would hardly have been able to sweep away the totalitarian regimes equipped, as they were, with the

powerful tools of demagogy, propaganda and terror. The two documents proclaimed, once and for all, the universal validity of fundamental human rights. They held out the promise of social progress and a higher standard of living through individual freedom and free enterprise.

Modern Bulgaria is gradually resuming its traditional place in the European family, developing the full range of relations with the countries and bodies of the European Union, of which it is an associate member. It is an active partner of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), working with it for the cause of peace and international security. Briefly, Bulgaria is steering a steady course to the West while building bridges to the East and the South.

In the last 50 years, the south-eastern part of Europe reproduced on a smaller scale the pattern of international relations and even the world contradictions; hence the high stake in the present effort to resolve the raging and smouldering conflicts in former Yugoslavia.

Bulgaria has been giving its unwavering support to the international effort to restore peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to build regional security. It has been doing so at a high economic and moral cost. We know from experience that the democratic option is the key to the reconciliation of interests and the rights of various ethnic and religious groups in a rule of law. We are, therefore, prepared to participate in building up the democratic institutions and in the material recovery of the embattled areas in the post-war period.

A long-term strategy for a lasting settlement of conflicts in south-eastern Europe should be founded in a modern communications and transport infrastructure linking the Balkan countries with the rest of Europe, north-south and west-east. There is an urgent need for specific programmes in support of stable regional development. The day before yesterday, together with the Presidents of other States in the region, we made one more effort to pool our resources, with the help of some international organizations, to breathe life into the initiatives for the development of south-eastern Europe.

Our historical experience has taught us that unity is strength. I would like to assure the Assembly that Bulgaria will continue to be a worthy Member of the United Nations.

The Acting President: I thank the President of the Republic of Bulgaria for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Zhelyu Zhelev, President of the Republic of Bulgaria, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Jacinto Peynado Garrigosa, Constitutional Vice-President of the Dominican Republic

The Acting President: The Assembly will next hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Jacinto Peynado Garrigosa, Constitutional Vice-President of the Dominican Republic.

His Excellency Mr. Jacinto Peynado Garrigosa, Constitutional Vice-President of the Dominican Republic, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Peynado Garrigosa (*interpretation from Spanish*): At this Special Meeting at which we commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, we must recognize and congratulate ourselves on, what the United Nations has meant to humanity since 1945. Its achievements at the international level, particularly those relating to the maintenance of peace, have been one of the most precious assets of mankind throughout this past half century.

We must also recognize that the ongoing efforts by the United Nations to promote human rights and to eliminate injustice have been of overriding importance.

This Organization has been able to settle armed conflicts and avoid armed conflicts, has fostered democratic institutions by promoting free and fair elections, and has raised its voice in defence of the poor, bringing humanitarian assistance to tens of millions of people throughout the world.

Its leadership in efforts to protect the environment is moving towards the achievement of consensus on reversing environmental degradation throughout the world and in achieving a sustainable way of life as we approach the twenty-first century.

We must also mention the enormous efforts made by the United Nations to eliminate infectious disease and to carry out the worldwide child-immunization campaign, and in the adoption of the Conventions on the Rights of the Child and on the protection of women.

But in this new millennium, which is only five years away now, our Organization must also face up to the

great challenges of a permanently changing world, in which areas of confrontation, discrimination and extreme poverty remain.

In the new world situation, peace implies economic and social well-being, environmental viability and the protection of human rights: to think of peace without these is virtually impossible. The times require that Governments now become involved in thorough change in their economic and social structures so as to establish the basis for sustainable human progress. Economic measures alone, without a reordering of society that would enhance the dignity, freedom and self-development of human beings, can never help in strengthening democracy.

The alleviation of poverty must be based on policies that include integration of the poorer sectors, so that they can enjoy the benefits of life in society. Let us then adopt the right solutions now to eliminate the causes of poverty, which have such a significant effect on the social fabric of our peoples. Let all our nations — rich and poor, large or small — seek together a way of achieving a better standard of living through sustainable economic and social development.

It is time to choose those instruments that will enable us to put into practice our ideas, which have already taken the form of conventions, declarations and resolutions by this Organization and its specialized agencies. Let us ensure that everybody benefits from the general well-being.

The great majority of Heads of State who have spoken before me have agreed that when the cold war ended, new priorities emerged for all the nations of the world. If we add to this reality the fact that the globalization process often requires additional sacrifices, we must conclude that the pressures on nations, particularly the smaller ones, will increase in the not far distant future. At that time, the United Nations will have to play an active and decisive role so as to maintain the social, economic and political balance among the nations that make it up, with the understanding that all have the same rights and obligations now that we are enjoying a relative peace and that titanic efforts are under way to resolve the conflicts that persist.

Our Government, headed by His Excellency Joaquín Balaguer, and the people that I represent join in celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, and share the hope that the Organization's efforts and successes will continue to increase in the continuing search for a just, united, common and fraternal humanity, sharing the material and spiritual assets of a civilization that can lead us to see people as part of a common humanity.

We would urge all Member States to respect the mandates and the initiatives of this Organization, for only through a true awareness of all the problems facing our countries and their possible solutions will we be able to promote the well-being of the individual.

The Acting President: I thank the Constitutional Vice-President of the Dominican Republic for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Jacinto Peynado Garrigosa, Constitutional Vice-President of the Dominican Republic, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Jean-Luc Dehaene, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Jean-Luc Dehaene, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium.

His Excellency Mr. Jean-Luc Dehaene, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Dehaene (interpretation from French): The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, which we are commemorating today, marks the beginning of a new era for our Organization. The longstanding divisions of the cold war have given way to a heightened awareness of our growing interdependence. The processes of integration and of regional and international cooperation, the development of trade and economic globalization are all positive phenomena. However, the international community remains vulnerable to imbalances, crises and conflicts that affect its various components. Self-interest as much as generosity therefore oblige the international community to show solidarity.

The best instrument for implementing that solidarity is still the United Nations. This fiftieth anniversary should therefore be an opportunity for us to adapt the United Nations to new realities and to equip it to face the challenges of the next century.

It is above all in the social and economic fields that I see a priority role for the United Nations. The globalization of socio-economic activities calls for an

integrated and universal approach, for if the development of the world economy is not accompanied by regulations and corrective mechanisms, it runs the risk of increasing destabilization and of breeding social and ecological imbalances.

Our Organization is the ideal forum in which to address these major questions efficiently by stimulating interaction among the various institutions and organs of the United Nations, which continue to play an important role in their respective fields.

I welcome the growing importance that the United Nations attaches to these global challenges. In recent years, major conferences on the environment and development, human rights, population, social development and, very recently, on women have strengthened our conviction that only a common, united commitment can enable us to tackle the major obstacles to development successfully.

Let us not lose the momentum generated by these major conferences, and let us give real effect to the objectives that they have set, using the United Nations to channel the political energy thus created and step by step to create a more just new world order. In that fairer new world order, our Organization should give particular importance to a concerted campaign to combat terrorism, the scourge of drugs, cross-border criminal activity and arms trafficking.

The United Nations should serve also as the world's conscience. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has served as the basis and a source of inspiration for the whole normative undertaking of the last 50 years in the area of the protection and dissemination of human rights.

In a wider context, the establishment of an international criminal court would, in our opinion, mark a new and important phase, and I hope that this objective will soon be achieved. Respect for human rights, combined with democratic social organization, creates conditions favourable for development. Without economic and social development, peace will always be fragile.

The United Nations performs a function of primary importance in the maintenance of international peace and security, whether acting alone or with regional organizations. The credibility of the United Nations peace operations can be ensured only if certain conditions are met.

The United Nations should urgently increase its capacity for and speed of intervention. One method of doing this would be to improve the existing system of stand-by forces.

The best contribution of the international community to peace and security is still, above all, avoiding the outbreak of conflicts by means of preventive diplomacy. There needs to be cooperation to this end among the United Nations, the Member States, regional organizations and specialized agencies.

Certainly the United Nations requires reform if it is to become more efficient and more effective. But we must remain pragmatic and first give it a solid financial base. As a reflection of its Member States, the United Nations can do nothing unless we confirm our political commitment and comply with our financial obligations. Any unilateral stance would only aggravate the United Nations crisis.

The United Nations, as the driving force of international dialogue and mutual understanding, deserves our respect and our support. It is still the best guide to economic and social development, the best instrument for the protection and promotion of human rights, and an assurance against military adventurism. Drawing on our half-century of experience, let us seize this opportunity to create a world in which future generations may find fulfilment in peace and dignity.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I thank the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Jean-Luc Dehaene, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Banharn Silpa-Archa, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Banharn Silpa-Archa, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand.

His Excellency Mr. Banharn Silpa-Archa, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Silpa-Archa (*spoke in Thai; English text furnished by the delegation*): Fifty years ago, a tree was

planted to shelter mankind from war and want. This tree, the United Nations, was an expression of faith and hope that, through international cooperation, peace would prevail and people everywhere would enjoy the fruits of progress. The dramatic end of the cold war created a widespread expectation that peace and prosperity were finally within reach. But peace has yet to prevail throughout the world.

To the people of Thailand, peace is not merely an absence of hostilities. Peace must be a positive state of well-being. It must be peace with freedom and justice, leading to prosperity. We call it *santisukh*, which means "happiness in tranquillity". To achieve this ideal peace, Thai culture places particular emphasis on tolerance and compromise. These virtues have stood the test of time. Thai rulers throughout history have recognized the importance of these virtues in fostering social harmony and progress. As a result, tolerance and compromise are deeply ingrained in the Thai character, forming the cement which bonds our society together. It is therefore only natural that these Thai core values should find resonance in the United Nations Charter, which seeks

> "to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom".

The President returned to the Chair.

Over the past few decades, this affinity between Thai values and United Nations goals has been reflected in South-East Asia. In Cambodia, both Thailand and the United Nations played key roles in ending the conflict and, in effect, in bringing peace to the region. Today, that formerly war-torn country is on the road to democracy, while its citizens are enjoying new-found security and freedom.

Peace is but one crucial facet of *santisukh*. The other involves the creation of a better life for the people. In this regard, the record of the United Nations speaks for itself. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has worked quietly but effectively to improve the lives of millions of Asians. Thanks in no small part to ESCAP, poverty and disease in the region are receding, and more people are taking charge of their own destiny.

In this day and age, where uncertainty lurks at every turn, and where sustainable development poses a challenge, the United Nations is more important than ever. Its role in South-East Asia has shown that, with the right kind of support, it is indeed capable of promoting "happiness in tranquility". We should see to it that the Organization concentrates on the things which only it can do, or which it can do better than any other international body: to stop people from killing each other, to get people to treat each other fairly, and to help people live in an environment of their own choosing. These are the most valuable contributions that the United Nations can make to mankind.

On behalf of the people and the Government of Thailand, I hereby reaffirm our faith in the principle's and purposes of the United Nations Charter and pledge our full support for the Organization in its efforts to promote lasting peace and global prosperity.

The President: I thank the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand for his statement.

> *His Excellency Mr. Banharn Silpa-Archa, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, was escorted from the rostrum.*

Address by His Excellency The Honourable Edison C. James, Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs, Legal Affairs and Labour of the Commonwealth of Dominica

The President: The Assembly will next hear a statement by His Excellency The Honourable Edison C. James, Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs, Legal Affairs and Labour of the Commonwealth of Dominica.

> *His Excellency The Honourable Edison C. James, Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs, Legal Affairs and Labour of the Commonwealth of Dominica, was escorted to the rostrum.*

Mr. James: On behalf of the Government and the people of the Commonwealth of Dominica, I extend sincere congratulations to this body on its fiftieth anniversary. May I also say that it is a privilege and an honour for our country to participate in this special celebration. I say "special" because Achievement Fifty in any endeavour attracts particular attention. For us in the cricketing world, the number 50 signifies a milestone in the cricketer's record, always met with warm applause; as individuals we mark our fiftieth birthday in special ways. However, such occasions provide the opportunity also for reflection, for self-examination and for self-criticism: for looking ahead.

Looking back, one can say that the past 50 years have not been the easiest or the most peaceful in the history of mankind. Fifty years ago, the world was slowly emerging from the batterings and atrocities associated with two global conflicts, particularly with the Second World War, that most horrifying experience in the history of mankind. There was, understandably, scepticism about the capacity of any one institution to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. But hope springs eternal in the human breast, and born out of the rubble was an ideal, embodied in the United Nations system, that war could give way to peace, that the use of measured words could replace the use of force in settling disputes. The task has not been easy.

Today we celebrate the fact that 50 years ago a group of dedicated men and women, undaunted by what they had witnessed, came together to forge an organization totally dedicated to peace among men. Today we salute those nations which, through the United Nations, continue to struggle towards that peace.

Among the areas of achievement during these past 50 years can be cited the dismantling of colonialism and the birth of the great majority of nations represented here today in this Assembly. We have seen friendly relations develop among nations, based on respect for the principle of equal rights and the self-determination of peoples. We have seen international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural and humanitarian character. We have seen encouragement for the achievement of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion. In all these endeavours, the United Nations has played a major part and has been a significant contributor to world peace. Indeed, today we can all celebrate.

The successes to which we allude could not have been achieved without the strong support offered the United Nations by its partners in the perennial search for peace: those regional and interregional bodies which serve as the monitors and implementers of United Nations policies. As current chairman of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), I am proud to state on behalf of my colleagues, Heads of Government of CARICOM, that our organization has been one of those partners. A most recent example of our commitment to world peace is our mission of hope to the Haitian people, a well loved part of our Caribbean family.

The United Nations has enjoyed other successes to which all can justly claim to have made some contribution. In this hemisphere, there is the solving of problems in El Salvador. Across the Atlantic there is the question of the independence of South-West Africa, now Namibia, and there is the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa.

While the solving of political problems is important, we view the present role of the United Nations as one of active involvement in the search for an enhanced quality of life for the inhabitants of this earth, thus linking peace and security with economic and social development. In this regard, the role played by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UNICEF, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and other specialized agencies of the United Nations deserve applause. Efforts at improving the situation of under-privileged persons should also receive universal applause. The Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing Conferences have helped to advance gender equality and give recognition to the role of women in the agenda for development.

As we look to the future with hope, we cannot help but reflect with concern on the fact that one of the founding Members of the United Nations has now been relegated to the status of a non-Member. I refer here to the Republic of China. The Commonwealth of Dominica believes that a way can and must be found for the 21 million people of that territory to have a voice in the affairs of the United Nations.

As we enter the second half-century of the United Nations, there is talk of modernization, revitalization and restructuring, concepts every organization must not only keep in mind, but must for its own survival actively seek to apply to its *modus operandi*. The United Nations system was designed to deal with the problems of the post-war period, problems mainly related to the disruption of international peace through recourse to arms. Today's threat to peace has to do primarily with development. We would like to believe, therefore, that the cost- cutting measures and streamlining proposed for this restructuring will take into account the legitimate aspirations of those who people small and vulnerable States such as the Commonwealth of Dominica. We also ask that in the name of justice for all, powerful and prosperous countries refrain from trade and economic measures which will have as a result the lowering of the standard of life of these small and vulnerable States. Let us always remember that every human being has a right

to be clothed with dignity, and that at the very heart of the cosmos stands that same human being, that irreducible kernel of development.

The world looks to us for leadership, and much more. The Commonwealth of Dominica pledges its support to, and will seek to collaborate with all United Nations efforts to provide this leadership to the world. Guidance, fairness, justice, peace and security are for many still distant ideals. Let us reaffirm our belief in the principles enshrined in our Charter. Let us rededicate ourselves to bequeathing a healthy planet, a peaceful world to succeeding generations. We cannot and shall not let them down.

The President: I thank the Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs, Legal Affairs and Labour of the Commonwealth of Dominica for his statement.

His Excellency The Honourable Edison C. James, Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs, Legal Affairs and Labour of the Commonwealth of Dominica, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Her Excellency Mrs. Benazir Bhutto, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

The President: The Assembly will now hear a statement by Her Excellency Mrs. Benazir Bhutto, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Her Excellency Mrs. Benazir Bhutto, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mrs. Bhutto: Fifty years ago this day, men and women of vision assembled to create an Organization to save the world from war.

The principles of equal rights and self-determination lay at the heart of that Charter. Millions in Asia, Africa and Latin America owe their freedom to the pursuit by this Organization of these noble ideals. We celebrate this achievement. For 50 years there has been no global conflict. We celebrate this great achievement.

We applaud the United Nations humanitarian and peace-keeping interventions, to which the brave sons of Pakistan have contributed with their own blood.

We welcome the United Nations efforts to emphasize social issues, including population, social development, women and human settlements.

The threat of global conflict has receded, but the images of suffering in Kashmir, in Bosnia and other regions have saddened us all. And although foreign occupation of Afghanistan has ended, Pakistan has been left to carry the burden of one and a half million refugees. The United Nations needs to share this burden and strengthen its efforts for peace in Afghanistan.

So, as we celebrate the achievements of the United Nations, we pause for self-criticism and self-appraisal.

The Secretary-General has described the Kashmir dispute as one of the oldest items on the United Nations agenda. Forty-eight years of occupation have not crushed the spirit of a noble people, committed to the right of self-determination, committed to the ideals of the United Nations, placing their hopes on the United Nations pledge to hold a plebiscite to determine their future.

Do not close your hearts, your minds, to the torment of Kashmir.

Global interdependence is reality. U Thant said, "It is not starry-eyed idealism", but our "instinctive sense of survival" that brings us all here. Survival today means a common effort to reduce poverty, hunger and disease, to save our environment, to address human needs, to prevent social disintegration and to restore moral values as the foundation for the actions of individuals and nations. Survival means greater democratization within nations and within the international system.

The Security Council needs enlargement, but not in its permanent membership. An Under-Secretary-General should be appointed to give greater emphasis to poverty alleviation. Peace-keeping and conflict resolution mechanisms need strengthening. I invite Member States to Islamabad for a conference for this purpose next year.

It is insufficient for us to denounce atrocities in Rwanda, Bosnia and Kashmir. The perpetrators must be punished. We should create an international criminal court for this purpose. And in the age of the information highway, we need to distinguish between the freedom of expression, the freedom of action and the freedom to pervert, to pollute and to destroy.

New challenges face us. Terrorism, the narcotics trade and arms smuggling are some of the evils that know no boundaries. To meet these challenges, we need the United Nations. To meet these challenges, the United Nations needs an independent financial base. For this, a

tax on international financial transactions, on international travel, on the exploitation of space or the oceans, can be considered. Today, the responsibility for the future rests on our shoulders. Let us not shirk that responsibility.

Let us remember the words of the philosopher Spinoza, who said: "Peace is not merely the absence of war. It is a virtue that springs from force of character".

The President: I thank the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for her statement.

Her Excellency Mrs. Benazir Bhutto, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency The Right Honourable Percival James Patterson, Prime Minister of Jamaica

The President: The Assembly will next hear a statement by His Excellency The Right Honourable Percival James Patterson, Prime Minister of Jamaica.

His Excellency The Right Honourable Percival James Patterson, Prime Minister of Jamaica, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Patterson: Fifty years ago the United Nations was founded to promote international peace and security. Its mission was to foster cooperation between nations. The effective functioning of a system of collective security was immediately threatened by bitter and intense super-Power rivalry.

It is proof of its resilience that the United Nations has survived the cold war and prolonged periods of international tension. It has contributed constructively to resolving a proliferation of regional conflicts and tackling other critical problems which imperil international security. There are other sterling achievements which are deservedly a source of pride. It has presided over the decolonization process, resulting in profound geopolitical changes. It has fostered a significant broadening of international programmes, through innovative social and economic programmes, embracing many fields of cooperation. We in Jamaica welcome its latest progeny, the International Seabed Authority, which enables all nations to exploit peacefully the resources of the seabed as the common heritage of mankind.

We concede that the United Nations is by no means perfect. Yet we shudder even to contemplate what kind of world would have emerged without it. It has become an indispensable instrument in the search for global dialogue in the resolution of disputes. It offers the only hope for the harmonization of global interests and for defusing the complex issues which otherwise can so easily ignite.

We sometimes forget that the United Nations is the creature of its Members. We make it what we will. As Member States, it is our solemn obligation to build an effective system which generates lasting peace and social justice. This will entail revitalization and reform in the structure of United Nations organs and the content of their programmes. Reform of the system must reflect the current political realities. It must also be driven by the legitimate right of all Member States to democratic participation on the basis of sovereign equality, no matter what the size, wealth or power. The right of veto must be reviewed. We need a brand new agenda now. It cannot be business as usual. The traditional approach will not suffice.

One billion of the world's population still languish in extreme poverty. The desperation and frustration in the daily struggle for survival by so many often ends in conflicts, straining the bonds of social cohesion and resulting in hostile and violent eruptions.

The eradication of poverty and its attendant evils — starvation, malnutrition, homelessness — must engage the preoccupation of the entire international community. Wherever they occur, these problems cannot be confined to the place of origin. All of us have a stake in their solution. The improvement of the human condition throughout the entire planet must be the immediate objective of all our efforts. If purely humanitarian concerns will not suffice, let us be spurred into action by the practical need to avoid incessant turmoil and thereby maintain global stability.

To recognize the linkages is simply not enough. There is urgent need for the commitment of resources on a scale commensurate with the immensity of the problem. We require a global partnership in which those with the means bear their full share in a global programme to promote development and thereby spare any human being anywhere from the scourge of hunger, ignorance and disease.

Let not this occasion be just another celebration of institutional endurance but a reaffirmation of our collective will to confront the compelling challenges as we face the new millennium. Our prospects for the future

are inextricably linked. Let us today renew our pledge to create a world of enduring peace and abundant prosperity for every member of the human race.

The President: I thank the Prime Minister of Jamaica for his statement.

His Excellency The Right Honourable Percival James Patterson, Prime Minister of Jamaica, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Yitzhak Rabin, Prime Minister and Minister of Defense of the State of Israel

The President: The Assembly will next hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Yitzhak Rabin, Prime Minister and Minister of Defense of the State of Israel.

His Excellency Mr. Yitzhak Rabin, Prime Minister and Minister of Defense of the State of Israel, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Rabin: *Shalom.* This podium has heard many cries of joy, as well as many words of despair. This podium has seen justice, but it has also seen evil, cruelty and exploitation. In the past 50 years this podium has seen empires fall, and borders erased. But it has also seen people awaken to their freedom and the nations of the world display their flags side by side. It has become possible to fulfil the words of the prophet Isaiah, a son of the Jewish people:

> "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more".

This is the dream which I bring to you today from Jerusalem, the eternal capital of the State of Israel and the heart of the Jewish people.

This morning I appear before you, the Heads of State of the international community, as the Prime Minister of the State of Israel and as the representative of the Jewish people. I also stand before you today as a representative of those for whom the creation of the United Nations came too late. I come here today in the name of the 6 million whose lives were turned into ashes, whose souls ascended to heaven in burning flames. We will never let them be forgotten. I stand here as a representative of the children who will never smile, in the name of the parents whose children were torn from their arms, of the grandmothers and grandfathers whose screams fell on deaf ears.

But we will also never forget our benefactors in this organization of the United Nations who 48 years ago gave us a chance for independence. Up to this very day, we still hear the echoes of the roll-call vote and the two thirds of the Member States of the Organization who, on that fateful evening, voted in support, fulfilling their moral responsibility.

There were also many years when, in this hall, hurtful and unjust decisions were taken against us. There were absurd resolutions which have since been rescinded, such as the resolution equating Zionism with racism. Many ideologies have failed and faded away. But it is Zionism that brought the Jewish people to its historical homeland. Zionism won.

We are grateful to the international community for its encouragement at this historic moment which is unfolding on our little plot of land: the agreement between Israel and the Palestinians — and I wish to congratulate Chairman Arafat on being our partner in this achievement; the peace treaties between Israel and Egypt, and between Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan; and the significant changes in Israel's relationship with the entire Middle East.

The road is still long. However, we are determined to continue until we have brought peace to the region, for our children and our children's children and for all the peoples of the region. This is our mission. We will fulfil it.

Just as we came to you to protest, we now come to praise the change in the relationship between Israel and the international community and the United Nations. However, we cannot be complacent. The United Nations must continue to give expression to the new reality in the Middle East. We must all be at the forefront of the fight against the forces which threaten peace and security in the region for all the countries, for all the peoples of the region, and for the entire world.

We call upon the international community to assist us in locating our missing in action, and in enabling our prisoners of war to return to their homes and families.

As long as children die from hunger, our job here is not yet finished. As long as there is no peace in every corner of the world, our job here is not yet finished.

The United Nations must support those who are working for peace. It must intensify the international struggle against terrorism and its supporters. Terrorism is the world's cancer today. Don't fool yourselves: even if you ignore terror it can enter any of your homes. Terror must be defeated. Peace must win. This is a fight that we cannot afford to lose.

Israel celebrates here with everyone — with all those attending here and with the entire world — 50 years of the United Nations.

The President: I thank the Prime Minister and Minister of Defense of the State of Israel for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Yitzhak Rabin, Prime Minister and Minister of Defense of the State of Israel, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Khamphoui Keoboualapha, Deputy Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Khamphoui Keoboualapha, Deputy Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

His Excellency Mr. Khamphoui Keoboualapha, Deputy Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Keoboualapha *(spoke in Lao; interpretation from French text furnished by the delegation)*: I am honoured to represent my country, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, at this historic commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. On behalf of the Government and people of Laos I would like to begin by extending our warm greetings to Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, our Secretary-General, to Their Excellencies the Heads of State and Government, to the heads of delegations and to the distinguished representatives present on this solemn occasion. In particular, I should like to express my sincere thanks to the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary, chaired by Australia, for its impeccable performance. I should also like to thank Mrs. Gillian Martin Sorensen, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General for Public Relations, for her outstanding contribution to this endeavour.

The commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations offers us an unprecedented opportunity for the international community to learn from the lessons and experience of the past and to use them to make the role of the United Nations more effective and to achieve its ultimate goals, namely, the maintenance of peace and socio-economic development in the world.

During the last five decades, our universal Organization has been sorely tried in many conflicts and upheavals in various parts of the world. Despite the difficulties encountered, the United Nations has not only been able to survive, it has also been able considerably to strengthen its role in solving world problems. Amongst its many activities, there have been many commendable achievements in the area of decolonization, the establishment of the rights of peoples to self-determination and in the prevention of the threat of a nuclear holocaust. Its valuable contribution to the economic and social development of peoples is well known in the international community.

While we welcome what has been achieved, we cannot but confirm the fact that today's world is entering a new era — an era of cooperation for development. Yet the world is still without true peace. Prospects for the settlement of several political conflicts are bleak and remote. As many delegations have pointed out, to this must be added, poverty, disease, war victims, ignorance, backwardness and illiteracy, which are endemic in many countries and pose a major challenge to all nations. In order to remedy this state of affairs, it is essential to restructure the United Nations so that it can play a more effective part.

The realities of the world today show us that true peace cannot prevail until the imperatives of socio-economic development have been adequately addressed. Likewise, there can be no development without peace. The twin concepts of peace and development are therefore mutually complementary and deserve equal consideration.

As part of the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations we in the Lao People's Democratic Republic organized various events with broad popular participation in recognition of the Organization's assistance and cooperation that has contributed to much to the socio-economic development of the Lao people.

It is our hope that this historic commemoration will be a spectacular success.

The President: I thank the Deputy Prime Minster of the Lao People's Democratic Republic for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Kahmphoui Keoboualapha, Deputy Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Salem Ould Lekhal, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mauritania

The President: I next call upon His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Salem Ould Lekhal, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mauritania.

His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Salem Ould Lekhal, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mauritania, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Ould Lekhal (*interpretation from Arabic*): I have the pleasure of reading to you the statement that the Prime Minister of Mauritania, Sidi Mohamed Ould Boubacar intended to make on this occasion:

"It gives me pleasure to address the Assembly on this memorable occasion on behalf of the President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, His Excellency Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya.

"Allow me at the outset, Sir, to congratulate you on your election to preside over this historic session. On the occasion of this commemoration my congratulations go also to His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the United Nations Secretary-General, and to all the departments and specialized agencies of the United Nations.

"The fiftieth anniversary of our Organization, which we commemorate today, affords the international community an opportunity to reflect on the developments that have taken place in the world since the United Nations was founded, and to take stock of the Organization's successes and failures.

"The 50 years that have elapsed since the establishment of the United Nations are long enough to allow us to look back and to evaluate the work of the Organization. The object-lessons we can draw from such evaluation would help us chart our course towards the bright future we hope for in line with the lofty goals of our Organization which was originally created to resolve mankind's problems on a basis of justice.

"The United Nations came into being at a particularly painful moment in man's history. The world, battered by war, was yearning for peace, stability and economic reconstruction. There can be no doubt that since then the United Nations, through its specialized agencies and associated bodies, has chalked up considerable successes — in the maintenance of international peace and security, in decolonization, in the promotion of human rights and democracy as well as in the sphere of development assistance and in combating major endemic diseases.

"Here, I take special pleasure in paying a tribute to the invaluable assistance given Mauritania, along with other developing countries, by the United Nations specialized agencies, especially the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in their respective fields.

"Although it is true that the era of bipolar confrontation has been superseded by an era of greater dialogue for the maintenance of international peace and security, and although striking progress has been made recently in the world, particularly in South Africa, where apartheid has been dismantled, and in the Middle East, where peace has begun to glimmer on the horizon, many countries still continue to live amid the turmoil of armed conflict and the majority of mankind still suffers from poverty and underdevelopment.

"The least developed countries, faced as they are with the effects of the world economic crisis, with an inexorable deterioration in terms of trade, with a pitiless external-debt burden and with a decrease in the volume of international assistance, are struggling on every front.

"The current crisis and the instability it is creating have their origins in the basic structural imbalances of the international economic system. The poverty and destitution of the majority of

mankind are a blot on the world's conscience and a threat to peace and international security.

"These imbalances and inequities must be tackled through innovative and bold solutions designed to meet the demands and realities of our shared world. In this connection we note the relevance of the pertinent resolutions adopted at the various world summits convened in recent years.

"The theme of today's commemoration — 'We the peoples of the United Nations ... united for a better world' — must be more than a slogan. May the wisdom and farsightedness of our forebears who wrote the United Nations Charter in 1945 inspire us to adopt the conduct and attitudes that will enable us to avoid the misfortunes and disasters of war and insecurity.

"From this rostrum, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania reaffirms its commitment to work to advance the great ideals of our Organization, to promote and consolidate international peace and security and to strengthen cooperation and solidarity amongst all nations for a world free of war, poverty and underdevelopment."

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mauritania, who read out a message from the Prime Minister.

His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Salem Ould Lekhal, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mauritania, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Baboucarr-Blaise Ismaila Jagne, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Gambia

The President: I now call upon His Excellency Mr. Baboucarr-Blaise Ismaila Jagne, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Gambia.

His Excellency Mr. Baboucarr-Blaise Ismaila Jagne, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Gambia, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Jagne: I have the honour, on behalf of His Excellency Captain Yahya A. J. J. Jammeh, Chairman of the Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council and Head of State of the Republic of The Gambia, to deliver this statement on the auspicious occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

The commemoration of the golden jubilee of the United Nations affords us a unique opportunity to review our past achievements and failures and, more to the point, to carve out a new path for our world that would be a community of peoples who need each other for survival. I refer, of course, to an interdependent world, a global village, in which the achievement of socio-economic growth, peace and security in one country would depend largely on similar performance in other countries. Can the developing South grow appreciably without the participation of the industrialized North? Can the North continue to prosper in the face of poverty and deprivation in the South? We in the developing countries of the South need a head start, as was given to Europe in the aftermath of the Second World War through the Marshall Plan. There should be no half-way measures.

Fifty years after the signing of its Charter the United Nations continues to stand as a universal symbol for millions of people all over the world. In our view, the United Nations holds the solution to the quest for world peace and security, and, in this regard, any country that fulfils the obligations of membership should be allowed to take its rightful place in our midst on the basis of the widely accepted principle of universality. That is why my delegation believes that the Republic of China on Taiwan should be re-admitted into the United Nations. It should be noted that there is a peaceful revolution going on in the Republic of China on Taiwan that promises to make the concept of a global village a reality. I refer to the information-technology revolution.

Unlike the United Nations, which has registered 50 years of existence, our Government has recently celebrated a successful year in office. The task of nation-building has not been made easy by the prevailing harsh economic and political climate under which developing countries, like ours, have to operate. The Government of the Republic of the Gambia remains committed, however, to the successful implementation of its Programme of Rectification and Timetable for Transition to Democratic Civilian Rule, as well as the Programme for Socio-Economic Development. Every effort is being made to meet the targets set. It is disheartening to note, however, that our traditional partners in development, rather than joining hands with us in our efforts to build a new society, are looking for the slightest signs of derailment of the transition process. In this way, they could sit back and say, "I told you so!" If we are marching alone,

therefore, it is because our partners have decided to march out of step.

The legitimate aspirations of small States will, we hope, henceforth be given greater attention by the United Nations, bearing in mind that the greatness of a country depends not on its size but on the quality of its leadership and the national character of its people.

It is our fervent hope, too, that from now on nations will not be guided in their relationships by the law of the jungle or the misguided instinct of might being right. What happened to the State of Kuwait five years ago is still fresh in our memories. Such aggressive behaviour must never happen again to any country, however big or small.

In our relentless endeavour to promote international peace and security, there should be more consultation between the United Nations and regional organizations. In our view unilateral decisions are, for the most part, counter-productive. A case in point is the dispute between Libya and some Western countries. We believe that the position of the Organization of African Unity on this dispute offers a reasonable starting point for a resolution of the impasse.

The presence of President Fidel Castro at this commemorative event should bring into sharper focus the three-decade-long blockade that has been imposed on the Cuban people. We reiterate that it is high time that this blockade was lifted.

As we commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of our Organization we should also recognize that the tasks ahead are startlingly clear, and that we must face them squarely.

There are some who claim that we have lost our self-confidence as a result of the severe and debilitating nature of the crises confronting the international community in the post-cold-war era. My delegation believes, however, that, while we must be frank and critical, especially in owning up to our past shortcomings, we must not lose confidence or faith in our collective ability to summon the necessary will and take the appropriate action in the interests of mankind.

There is growing universal consensus on restructuring the main organs of the United Nations to reflect current international reality. Fifty years after its founding and its enlargement to include almost all the countries of the world, the United Nations today bears no resemblance to the Organization set up after the Second World War to cater to the needs of that period. The Security Council especially, as the main policy-making arm of the United Nations, should be expanded to really take into account the views and aspirations of the great majority of the membership of the world body.

It is our sincere wish that, as we are poised on the threshold of a new millennium fraught with challenges and opportunities, we, as Members of the United Nations, will be able to stand firm and live up to the confidence reposed in us by our peoples, the peoples of the United Nations.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Gambia for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Baboucarr-Blaise Ismaila Jagne, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Gambia, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Her Excellency Mrs. Susanna Agnelli, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy

The President: I now call on Her Excellency Mrs. Susanna Agnelli, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy.

Her Excellency Mrs. Susanna Agnelli, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mrs. Agnelli: Allow me to begin by paying a tribute to you, Mr. President, and to the Secretary-General for the impeccable way in which the Special Commemorative Meeting has been conducted.

Seventy-five years ago at the end of the First World War a few enlightened leaders joined together in pursuit of the common dream of a lasting peace. But their hopes were quickly dashed; some chose almost instantly to explore their own distinct path and the dream came to an end. The result was, two decades later, the outbreak of the Second World War.

Fifty years ago the world's leaders turned even more forcefully to the same dream, and this time succeeded in uniting all countries and peoples around common ideals and values. The result has been 50 years without a major war.

Preserving peace takes good will, untiring efforts and constant support from all United Nations Members. We should always remember the words of the United

Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Constitution:

> "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed."

The world has changed in the last 50 years and the United Nations has to change with it. International conflicts have been replaced by internal ones, characterized by political, economic, ethnic and religious tensions that often imply grave humanitarian crises and human rights violations. We must seek new formulas and instruments to face the new crises. Italy is working together with the United Nations to establish a staff college in Turin to train United Nations personnel in various fields.

Respect for international law remains of fundamental importance, but international law must also be adapted to new situations, as exemplified in the creation of the International Tribunals for former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. Yet ad hoc solutions are not enough. One step in the right direction would be the establishment of the international criminal court. My country trusts that this court can soon become a reality and has offered to host in Italy the conference for the adoption of its statute.

A reform of our Organization is clearly needed. Efforts are already being made in this direction. Italy is contributing an original proposal for the reform of the Security Council, which would benefit the Organization as a whole and all its Member States by making the Council more democratic, more representative, more transparent and more accountable to the General Assembly.

It is often said that there can be no peace without development and no development without peace. Ensuring the realization of both goals will take serious efforts by all. Developed and developing nations alike must strive to identify the priorities and tools needed to bring increased and more fairly divided prosperity to all the people of the world. Italy's commitment to these ideals is well known. I wish solemnly to reaffirm it before everyone here today.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy for her statement.

Her Excellency Mrs. Susanna Agnelli, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Mario Enrique Villarroel Lander, President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/12 A, I now call on His Excellency Mr. Mario Enrique Villarroel Lander, President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

His Excellency Mr. Mario Enrique Villarroel Lander, President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Villarroel Lander (*interpretation from Spanish*): I am honoured and pleased to come to this great forum of the United Nations, which is now celebrating its fiftieth anniversary, bearing greetings on behalf of another universal institution already more than three quarters of a century old, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. These greetings that I have the honour to convey are backed up by the congratulations and best wishes of the 163 member national societies of the International Federation and of the 20 more that are in the process of formation.

Both the United Nations and our institution were founded by idealists who sought to bring works of enduring peace into the world. In our missions — yours aimed at the construction of a better world with peace, full justice and freedom; and ours aimed at the improvement of life for the world's vulnerable people — have likewise brought together the world's States and their peoples.

The United Nations now has 185 Member States, and over these crucial 50 years of existence it has, despite setbacks and great difficulties, quite clearly functioned well and achieved real successes. Our Federation has 128,600,000 members and volunteers and 260,740 employees, who serve with dedication all over the world.

Both our organizations are directly and continuously affected by daily happenings and events of all kinds involving our members. We are both multinational and cross-cultural in all our ways and customs. Our members represent every religion, culture and ethnic heritage in the world.

As those present well know, the humanitarian mission carried out by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is that of helping the most vulnerable people of the world — the victims of catastrophes, poverty and disease, the disadvantaged, refugees and displaced persons — by seeking to prevent, combat and overcome the things that make them vulnerable.

In our work we cooperate effectively with the United Nations, essentially through its specialized bodies and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. Partly in recognition of the work we have accomplished, our past history and that significant and generous cooperation, the United Nations granted the International Federation the status of Permanent Observer in the General Assembly, thereby enabling us to share with it our views on the difficult issues affecting humanitarian work around the world today. By way of example, we could mention the complexity of relief operations, often conducted in fragmented States, and the politicization of humanitarian assistance, which underscores the need for organizations such as ours to maintain their neutrality and impartiality at all times.

We should also point out that minefields remain after conflicts are over, killing and maiming for years like some unimaginable curse. Sanctions bring undeserved suffering on civilian populations. Millions of refugees and displaced persons go for decades, sometimes even generations, without knowing a stable existence. Thousands upon thousands of people cross borders in search of better living conditions, sometimes only to find more violations of human rights and more violence than they had fled from. Problems of population, food, water supply and health loom menacingly over the provision of humanitarian needs. And the worst thing is that vindictive revenge matches, or at times exceeds, the insane violence of the enemy, which then faces its own difficulties in turn. These are some of the fundamental issues that the Red Cross and Red Crescent world will deal with in December, with the States signatories of the Geneva Conventions, at the twenty-sixth International Conference of our movement.

Neither can we forget that natural disasters, most of which are unavoidable, continue to take lives, maim people and impoverish nations, while technological disasters and the effects of offences against the environment poison entire regions, which then require years and vast expenditures to recover.

In this large context, it is imperative that we find ways to prevent many disasters if we do not wish to resign ourselves to their cyclic recurrence. However, the funds that donors now target for fostering development are taking a sharp downturn. That is why we decidedly share the view expressed by the Secretary-General in his August 1995 report on the work of the Organization. There he points out that in order to halt this downward spiral, sustainable human development must be instituted everywhere. A new vision of development, and the universal determination to achieve it, are essential for the worldwide progress all peoples desire and need.

We cannot overemphasize the value and fundamental necessity of encouraging and accomplishing sustainable institutional and resource development in order for nations and peoples to continue to prosper and grow. According to a well-known African saying, child-rearing requires the interest and participation of the entire village; in the same spirit, I would say that the growth and health of all humankind require constant commitment and action by all human beings, all nations, all peoples and all humanitarian institutions, such as the one I proudly serve.

We wish this lofty and vital institution at the service of all mankind, and its thousands of hard-working people, a happy fiftieth anniversary and every success in the work they undertake. In their responsible, systematic quest for peace and full justice, they overcome disagreement and discord, and in so doing, pave the way to a comprehensive, lasting peace, without the wars or social conflicts that divide mankind. For the sake of the future of humanity, this must be achieved. This is the lofty mission and the great challenge of the United Nations.

Allow me, on behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, to congratulate the United Nations on its fiftieth anniversary and on its great achievements.

The President: I thank the President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Mario Enrique Villarroel Lander, President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, was escorted from the rostrum.

The President: We have heard the last speaker for this morning's meeting.

May I ask once again, and for the last time, for punctuality at 3 o'clock this afternoon.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.